

The Cleveland
Museum of Art
January 14 –
March 8, 1987

Impressionist and
Post-Impressionist
Masterpieces: The
Courtauld Collection

December 29, 1986

IMPRESSIONIST AND POST-IMPRESSIONIST MASTERPIECES: THE COURTAULD COLLECTION
January 14 through March 8, 1987

Americans will have a singular opportunity to view one of the world's finest collections of late 19th-century avant-garde French paintings when the exhibition *Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Masterpieces: The Courtauld Collection* opens at The Cleveland Museum of Art on January 14, 1987. Selected from the holdings of the prestigious Courtauld Institute of Art in London, the forty-eight paintings--including what is widely regarded as Manet's last great canvas, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, and one of Gauguin's most treasured works, *Nevermore*--will be on view as a group for the only time in the United States. After closing in Cleveland on March 8, the exhibition will travel to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, The Art Institute of Chicago, and The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City.

This rare exhibition, organized and circulated by the International Exhibitions Foundation, Washington, D.C., is made possible by a grant from the IBM Corporation and an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities. Support has also been provided by British Airways and the Woodner Foundation. The exhibition coincides with the Courtauld Institute's move from its present quarters in Portman and Woburn Squares to renovated spaces in London's famed Somerset House, one of the city's last great neo-classical palaces, built in 1773 by William Chambers.

2-the courtauld collection

Evan Turner, director of The Cleveland Museum of Art and an alumnus of the Courtauld Institute, describes the Institute's founder and chief benefactor, Samuel Courtauld, as "one of the outstanding collectors of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist painting." Dr. Turner adds, "Virtually all of the masterpieces he collected with such insight are included in this one-time American tour."

The Courtauld exhibition features works by artists whose discoveries shaped 20th-century understanding of painting and aesthetics. Works by Manet, Pissarro, Degas, Monet, Renoir, Cézanne, van Gogh, Gauguin, Seurat, and others document, as few private collections do, a vital moment in history when artistic traditions of over 400 years had their final flowering in France and the foundations of modernism were firmly laid. Moreover, the exhibition illustrates the remarkable perception of an unconventional collector and connoisseur who championed an art generally unappreciated by his countrymen. At a time when the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists were rejected by many French and English critics and artists, Samuel Courtauld focused his attention on these painters now universally recognized as masters. In less than a decade, beginning with his 1922 purchase of the Toulouse-Lautrec drawing Woman in Bed and a late Renoir oil, Woman Tying Her Shoe, which appears in the current exhibition, he assembled the works that now form the core of the Courtauld collection.

Like Samuel Courtauld, who once wrote that on childhood visits to London's Royal Academy he "could see the fun of 'problem pictures,'" the artists represented in the Courtauld exhibition were revolutionary thinkers. Challenging the rhetoric of grand painting mandated by the official Salon of late 19th-century France, they rejected the notion that artistic subjects

3-the Courtauld collection

should be drawn from history or ancient mythology and painted on a vast scale. The Impressionists and, later, Post-Impressionists turned their gaze on the contemporary world: surrounding landscapes and streets, glimpses of familiar interiors, intimate moments of everyday existence, still lifes to be found among the fruits and glasses on common dining tables and in cafes, nature seen through squinting eyes at the height of the day. Rendered with new, looser brush strokes and lightened palettes which permitted the artists to explore the dissolution of color by light, these avant-garde works were dismissed by many critics as politically subversive and crude.

Among the pictures included in the Courtauld exhibition, Renoir's La Loge--a scene in which a fashionable Parisienne and her escort are observed in their box at the opera--was one of the most notable paintings hung in the Impressionists' first group show of 1874. The painting, purchased by Samuel Courtauld in 1925, is considered a work of Renoir's early maturity and an example of his virtuosity in composing areas of pure color.

Like Renoir, Manet and Degas frequently drew their subject matter from daily Parisian life. Manet (1832-83) is represented in this exhibition by three major paintings from successive decades of his career: Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe (c. 1863), Banks of the Seine at Argenteuil (1874), and A Bar at the Folies-Bergère (1881-2), his final, haunting masterpiece and the crowning glory of the Courtauld collection. Le Déjeuner is a smaller version of the more famous painting now on view in the Louvre in Paris--a highlight of the infamous 1863 Salon des Refusés, rejected by the official Salon for its "shocking" depiction of a nude woman casually picnicking with men in modern dress.

4-the Courtauld collection

Originally shown at the Salon of 1882, Manet's A Bar at the Folies-Bergère is regarded as a quintessential Impressionist masterwork and poignant record of the Parisian cafe scene in its heyday. Purchased by Samuel Courtauld in 1926 when English critics and collectors were still not fully conscious of the greatness of the French artists of the late 19th-century, the work typifies the candor with which Manet confronted and rendered his subject matter. The artist's radically altered composition, built around his presentation of the barmaid Suzon, sacrifices technically accurate perspective to intensify dramatic psychological effects and to capture a fleeting, private moment amidst the din and glitter of a capital's nightlife.

Of the four works by Degas (1834-1917) in the exhibition, three illustrate the artist's lifelong interest in the theme of women in solitary moments of self-absorption: Woman at a Window (c. 1871-72), fluidly painted with diluted oils, captures the effect of a figure seen against a brightly lit window; Seated Woman Adjusting Her Hair (c. 1884) and After the Bath (c. 1889-90) were executed in pastel, the favored medium of the artist's later years. The 1874 painting, Two Dancers on the Stage, exemplifies his love of the theme of ballet and his nearly photographic sense of composition and caught gestures.

The nine Cézanne paintings in the exhibition, dating from 1875 to 1896, comprise an exceptional chronicle of the artist's development and consequent contribution to modern art. A precursor of the Cubists, Cézanne (1839-1906) worked unremittingly to transform his experience of nature into pictorial form. A trio of important landscapes in the Courtauld collection testify to his achievements: The Tall Trees at the Jas de Bouffan (c. 1883), La Montagne Sainte-Victoire (c. 1887) and Le Lac d'Annecy (1896). Samuel Courtauld's love for Cézanne's work began in 1922, when he viewed seven of the artist's works

5-the courtauld collection

in an exhibition at the Burlington Fine Arts Club. There, he later wrote, "I felt the magic, and I have felt it in Cézanne's work ever since."

Cézanne's influence on Gauguin (1848-1903) is evident in the earliest of three major pieces by the latter in this exhibition. Painted in 1889, Haymaking reflects Gauguin's initial fascination with the simplification of form and the rhythm of flattened surfaces. The artist wrote of this interest in 1888, claiming that he wished to "get away as much as possible from anything that gives the illusion of an object." The subordination of perception to imagination that characterizes Gauguin's mature work is visible in both Nevermore and Te Rerioa (The Dream), major works painted within three weeks of each other in 1897 in Tahiti, where the artist's images reached their sensual peak. These pictures were purchased by Samuel Courtauld in 1926 and 1929, respectively.

Of the Post-Impressionist works represented in the Courtauld collection, those of Seurat (1859-1891) best evidence the vigor with which these later artists attempted to systematize Impressionist concepts and techniques. Seurat's method of defining forms by means of uniform dots of pure color, a technique based on scientific optical principles of color and light, resulted in such masterworks as The Bridge at Courbevoie (1886), Young Woman Powdering Herself (1888-90), and the Study for 'Le Chahut' (1889). The artist's pioneering style--embodied in a vast number of works for such a brief career--roused in critics a hostility equalled only by that vented against the original Impressionist painters.

The exhibition catalogue, Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Masterpieces: The Courtauld Collection, is published by Yale University Press and is partially underwritten by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

6-the Courtauld collection

It contains color illustrations and entries for each of the forty-eight paintings. In introductory essays, Dr. Dennis Farr, director of the Courtauld Institute Galleries, discusses Samuel Courtauld's activities as a collector; Dr. John House, lecturer at the Courtauld Institute, examines Impressionism in its broader historical contexts; and the staff of the Courtauld Institute's Technology Department describe what technical examinations have revealed about the working methods of the Impressionists. The catalogue will be available at the Museum Bookstore in a paperback edition at \$13.95 and in a clothbound edition at \$35.00.

From Cleveland, **Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Masterpieces: The Courtauld Collection** will travel to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (April 4-June 21, 1987), the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth (July 11-September 27, 1987), The Art Institute of Chicago (October 17, 1987-January 3, 1988), and The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City (January 30-April 3, 1988).

The Cleveland showing of the Courtauld collection, which will be supervised by Tom E. Hinson, curator of contemporary art at the Cleveland Museum, is supported by a grant from the Ohio Arts Council.

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For additional information, photographs, or color slides, please contact the Public Information Office, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44106; 216/421-7340.

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THE COURTAULD COLLECTION - PUBLIC PROGRAMS

All of these public programs are free. Many are made possible by funding from the IBM Corporation.

Special Guest Lectures: Five noted scholars discuss the Courtauld Collection and Impressionist and Post-Impressionist painting. Wednesdays at 5:45 pm in Gartner Auditorium.

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| January 14 | Samuel Courtauld as a Collector
Dennis Farr, Director, Courtauld Institute Galleries,
London |
| February 11 | Getting into Impressionism: Selections from the
Courtauld Collection
Charles Stuckey, Curator of Modern Painting,
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. |
| March 11 | Samuel Courtauld and Degas
Jean Sutherland Boggs, Director Emeritus,
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa |
| April 8 | The Painter, the City, and the Naturalist Aesthetic
George Shackelford, Associate Curator of European
Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Fine Arts,
Houston |
| May 13 | Is There Anything Left to Say About Impressionism?
Richard R. Brettell, Searle Curator of European
Painting, The Art Institute of Chicago |

Lectures by Cleveland
Museum of Art Staff:

Museum staff offer slide-talks on the lives and works of 19th-century French masters. Wednesdays, 2:15 pm; repeated at 5:45 pm.

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| January 21 | Manet and the Nightlife of Paris. Helen Borowitz |
| January 28 | Degas's Dancers. Helen Borowitz |
| February 4 | Renoir and Impressionism. Helen Borowitz |
| February 11
2:15 pm only | Seurat and Sondheim: The Sound and Light of Neo-
Impressionism. Helen Borowitz |

2-public programs

Lectures by Cleveland Museum of Art Staff: (continued)

February 18	Monet and Pissarro. Mariana Carpinisan
February 25	Cézanne. Katherine Solender
March 4	Van Gogh and Gauguin. Mariana Carpinisan

Gallery Talks by Cleveland Museum of Art Staff:

Presented at 1:30 pm on January 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20;
February 11, 15; and March 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

Evening lecture: Wednesday, January 21, 7:00 pm.

Art Films: Wednesdays at 12:30 and 7:00 pm in the Lecture Hall.
All films are in color.

January 7	The Impressionists, 26 min.
January 14	Edouard Manet: Painter of Modern Life, 30 min.
January 21	Degas, 16 min.
January 28	Claude Monet: 1840-1926, 41 min.
February 4	Renoir, 30 min.
February 11	Memories of Monet, 28 min.
February 18	The Post-Impressionists, 25 min.
February 25	The Precursors: Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, 26 minutes
March 4	The Prophets: Pont-Aven, the Nabis, Toulouse-Lautrec, 18 min.

Audio-Visual Program:

A slide-tape on Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works in both the Courtauld and the Cleveland Museum collections will run continuously in the Museum's audio-visual center during the exhibition.

The audio-visual center is open Tuesday through Saturday from 11:30 am to 4:00 pm (Wednesday until 9:30 pm) and Sunday from 1:30 to 4:30 pm.

3-public programs

Theatrical Performance:

Letters from the Yellow Chair

Wednesday, January 28, at 8:00 pm in Gartner Auditorium

The art and personality of Vincent van Gogh is illuminated in this two-man play based on the correspondence between Vincent and his younger brother Theo, an art dealer who supported the artist emotionally and financially. Written and performed by London actors Graham McTavish and Nick Pace, the hour-long play was first presented at London's National Gallery in the summer of 1986. The play, on its first American tour, is also being performed at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York this January.

Feature Films:

French Impressionist films from the silent era.
Wednesdays at 8:00 pm (except where noted) in the Lecture Hall. All films in black and white.

- January 7 **La Dixième Symphonie** (France, 1918). Directed by Abel Gance. A composer's new wife is blackmailed by a former lover. French intertitles, 74 min. Print courtesy of George Eastman House.
- Sunday
January 11,
3:30 pm **La Roue** (France, 1923). Directed by Abel Gance. In this brilliantly-edited epic, a railroad mechanic's love for his adopted daughter alienates his son. English intertitles, 153 min. Shown in Gartner Auditorium.
- January 14 **Fièvre** (France, 1921). Directed by Louis Delluc. A sailor's amorous advances toward a bar owner's wife result in tragedy. 40 min.
- The Smiling Madame Beudet** (France, 1922). Directed by Germaine Dulac. A domestic argument prompts a wife to dream of killing her husband. English intertitles, 27 min.
- January 21 **Le Brasier Ardent** (France, 1923). Ivan Mozhukin, the Russian-born star of the silent screen, directs and acts in this innovative experimental film. 36 min.
- Coeur Fidèle** (France, 1923). Jean Epstein's poetic masterpiece in which two men vie for one woman's affections. 61 min. Print courtesy of George Eastman House.
- January 28 **Kean** (France, 1924). Directed by Alexandre Volkoff; with Ivan Mozhukin. Dramatization of the final, scandal-ridden years of the great English tragedian, Edmund Kean (1789-1833). English intertitles, 92 min.

4-public programs

- February 4 **The Crazy Ray** (France, 1924). René Clair's film about a mad scientist who paralyzes Paris with a powerful ray machine. English intertitles. 45 min.
- The Imaginary Voyage** (France, 1926). Directed by René Clair. A young clerk and his friends are caught up in supernatural happenings. English intertitles. 50 min.
- February 11 **The Late Matthew Pascal** (France, 1925). Directed by Marcel L'Herbier; with Ivan Mozhukin. A man presumed dead discovers freedom. English intertitles. 113 min.
- February 18 **Ménilmontant** (France, 1926). Directed by Dimitri Kirsanoff. A young girl falls in love with a fickle boy who then abandons her. 35 min.
- Charleston** (France, 1926). Jean Renoir's film about an extraterrestrial scientist and a Charleston dancer. English intertitles, 17 min.
- The Little Match Girl** (France, 1928). Directed by Jean Renoir. Touching film version of the Hans Christian Andersen tale. English intertitles. 28 min.
- February 25 **La Glace à Trois Faces** (France, 1927). Directed by Jean Epstein. Three different women love the same wealthy young bachelor. English intertitles, 31 min.
- The Fall of the House of Usher** (France, 1928). Directed by Jean Epstein. Celebrated version of the Poe classic. English intertitles, 51 min.

Jean Renoir Color Films from the Fifties:

Sundays at 1:30 and 3:30 pm in the Lecture Hall

- January 4 **The Golden Coach** (France/Italy, 1953). Anna Magnani as an 18th-century commedia dell'arte star in a spirited love roundelay that contrasts theater and reality. 100 min.
- January 18 **French Cancan** (France, 1954). Jean Gabin and Edith Piaf in a fanciful rendition of the founding of the Moulin Rouge in 1880s Paris. 106 min.
- January 25 **Picnic on the Grass** (France, 1959). A worldly scientist succumbs to the charms of a farmer's daughter in this picturesque hymn to nature. 92 min.